

# **MAHOMET PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

## **REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING NOVEMBER 10, 2025 5:32PM AT THE LIBRARY**

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**Members Present:** Susie Baker, Scott Schaumann, Mike Cunningham, Kate Smith, Stevi Stutzman

**Members Absent:** Sarah Miller, Melissa Daley

**Also present:** John Howard, Tammy Caputo

Susie Baker opened the meeting by reading the library's mission statement: "Together we create a welcoming community that empowers everyone to learn, connect, create, and grow."

### **Review of the Minutes from October 13, 2025**

Mike Cunningham moved to approve the minutes from October 13, 2025. Scott Schaumann seconded. Kate Smith and Tammy Caputo noted some typos and wording changes. The motion passed, with amendments, unanimously.

### **Treasurer's Report**

#### **A. Financial Report for October 2025**

Kate Smith moved to approve the financial report for October 2025. Scott Schaumann seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

At the October 2025 meeting, Kate Smith asked why Special Reserves was so high. John Howard explained the reason is because the figure includes money donated to the expansion project.

John Howard pointed out the percentage of budget used for Adult Books is low at 16.56%. The reason is because of Baker & Taylor's shutdown. He noted the number will continue to rise now that we are using Ingram as our book supplier.

John Howard said that he expects the amount of money spent on electric & gas will decrease based on the rates we are getting from Ameren at this time.

#### **B. Check Register for October 2025**

Kate Smith moved to approve the check register for October 2025. Scott Schaumann seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Kate Smith asked about a check that had to be reissued to our auditors. John Howard noted that recently received the original check which had been issued, but mangled in the mail, back from Clifton Larsen. They seemed to have held it a long time before sending it back, and we had stopped payment on it while its whereabouts were unknown.

John Howard said the check to Premier Print Group was for our most recent publication of The Booklet. Much of the cost is for printing. The fee for mailing is included in the total cost and is minimal.

Scott Schaumann asked what the library purchases from Bayscan. John Howard said we purchase receipt printer tape from them. Kate Smith noted we also purchase locking DVD cases from them.

### **Director's Report for October 2025**

John Howard reported monthly circulation statistics are up again. He also reported that people counter numbers are up.

Scott Schaumann asked why computer usage was up 139% over last year. John Howard said partially due to an increase in use by teens. Scott Schaumann asked what the high-water mark of use is on the patron computers. John Howard stated about 50%.

Scott Schaumann asked if the locker system is working yet. John Howard said yes. Scott Davis is in the process of repairing the two broken lockers.

John Howard said the Everything Mahomet website will be operational on January 2, 2026.

John Howard said attendance at the Braver Angels program was around 40 people. He stated more Mahomet residents were in attendance than in previous Braver Angel programs.

John Howard said Remco will be repairing the blinking lights inside and outside the library. Kate Smith asked if they could look at the lights in the Edgar Room. They appear to be dimmer than usual.

### **Audience Comments**

There were no audience comments.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **A. Finance Committee**

The finance committee met on October 27, 2025. Chair Kate Smith reported that the committee met with Jaime Rachlin of Meristem Advisors. Jamie ran several different scenarios through his financial spreadsheet. One scenario included adding the cost of more

capital repairs to the cost of the project. Kate Smith said more details will be provided during tonight's meeting when discussing the expansion project.

## **B. Building and Grounds Committee**

The building and grounds committee met on October 27, 2025. Chair Mike Cunningham reported the committee walked the grounds. The good news is the list of repairs needed was relatively small. John Howard has the list of issues noted by the committee.

## **Unfinished Business**

### **A. Approval of Ordinance 2025-2 Building and Maintenance (tabled in August)**

Kate Smith moved to approve Ordinance 2025-2 Building and Maintenance. Stevi Stutzman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

## **New Business**

### **A. Change in Time to Board of Trustees Meetings for the Remainder of 2025-26 Year**

Stevi Stutzman moved to table the decision until the December 2025 meeting. Scott Schaumann seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Stevi Stutzman moved to start the December meeting at 5:30pm. Mike Cunningham seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

## **B. Status of Expansion Project**

### **a. Discussion of new analysis from Jaime Rachlin of Meristem Advisors regarding form and amount of referenda**

John Howard, Kate Smith, and Mike Cunningham said it was very helpful for them to go through different scenarios with Jamie.

John Howard said the library is committed to providing 15% of the total project cost. The money will come from a combination of reserves, project donations, and grants.

John Howard said the total project cost is \$10,500,000, and that the referendum amount would be \$8,925,000. The current estimate of the impact on taxes is \$5.33/month on a \$300,000 house.

John Howard said fundraising efforts will span the next 3 years. There is no need to push to raise funds by December since we know the total cost of the project.

The Board asked John Howard to engage with bond counsel to determine the wording for a bond referendum. John said he would work on it this week.

Based on discussions, it appears the Board is leaning toward a bond referendum. It will be easier to pass.

Scott Schaumann asked if we could add a tax calculator function to our website as part of our advertising campaign. John Howard said he thought we could. He said Chatham Library used one during their expansion campaign.

### **b. Updates from Expansion Campaign Executive Committee regarding fundraising**

John Howard said the expansion campaign executive committee has started meeting on a weekly basis. Members of the committee are Susie Baker, Mike Cunningham, John Howard, and Tammy Caputo.

John Howard stated the committee is proposing to the Board the library hire a professional fundraiser for the capital campaign. We are not doing well fundraising. John has had to take over a big portion of fundraising effort. One of the volunteers backed out of his commitment to the fundraising campaign.

Scott Schaumann asked how a deal is made with a professional fundraiser. John Howard said the professional will either charge an hourly rate or a monthly rate. They do not charge a % of total funds raised.

Stevi Stutzman said we should move forward and start searching for a professional fundraiser. She stated three reasons she is in favor of this:

1. It will pay for itself.
2. It will unburden John Howard and free him up to work on other tasks.
3. We have the time. Originally, we felt we needed to know by December the amount money raised through donations in order to calculate how much was needed by referendum. John has stated he is confident that the library can raise \$500,000 in private donations over the next three years, so that is the amount we are assuming for that element of the project funding.

Kate Smith said John Howard's time is needed in other places.

John Howard will begin searching for candidates. He will bring information to the Board about the candidates he chose and have the Board vote on which one to hire. We will likely have board members involved in the interview process.

### **C. Discussion of Holiday Calendar - Suggestions from Staff**

John Howard said for the last two years the library has closed at 5:00pm the week between Christmas and New Year. Library staff would like to close early this year too.

Mike Cunningham moved to close the library at 5:00pm between Christmas and New Year this year. Scott Schaumann seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Library staff suggested closing the library on Juneteenth. Kate Smith said she preferred being open. It is an opportunity to educate people about the meaning behind the holiday. Mike Cunningham agreed with Kate Smith. Susie Baker also agreed with Kate Smith.

Mike Cunningham suggested we look at similar libraries to see how many are closed on Juneteenth. At this time, no change will be made on this issue.

### **D. Review of Illinois Public Library Standards - Required as part of the Per Capita Grant Requirements**

Prior to the meeting, John Howard reviewed the most recent edition of the Illinois Public Library Standards. He noted the items the library needs to work on and presented them to the Board. They are listed below.

- Building and Grounds #6 (intermediate) – The library needs an updated facilities maintenance manual that includes instructions for operation of all building systems.
- Human Resources
  - #9 (core) – The current succession plan for the director needs to be rewritten.
  - #9 (intermediate) – Succession plans for staff with specialized knowledge needs to be developed. If a plan is in place, it needs to be reviewed and updated where necessary.
- Marketing & Promotion #7 (core) – The library needs to develop a social media policy.
- Programming #3 (core) – The library needs to develop a board-approved programming policy for all ages that includes a protocol for response to challenges.
- Safety & Emergency Preparedness
  - #1 (core) – The library needs to develop a communication protocol to keep the board, staff and public informed in the event of a disaster or emergency.
  - #3 (intermediate) – The library needs to develop safety and emergency training in the new employee on-boarding procedures.
  - #8 (Core) – The library needs to be sure we have an emergency preparedness plan this is kept in an off-site location. We do have this, but it needs to be updated.
- Technology #6 (core) – The library needs to train staff on adaptive features available in library equipment and software so they can facilitate their use by patrons of all abilities.

Scott Schaumann suggested having conversations with patrons who need adaptive features and ask if there are adaptive features they need to use that are not offered by the library.

John Howard noted that these standards are new this year, and that some of them have not been in previous standards. That reflects most of the standards for which we are not fully compliant.

### **Strategic Plan**

John Howard said his priority has been the expansion project and does not have the strategic plan finished. He said Rebecca Strom has worked on her portion of the plan. He suggested waiting until after March 2026 to finish the plan. The outcome of the referendum impacts the parts of the strategic plan, and it makes sense to wait. In general, the Board agreed. The Board formally stated they will expect it after March 2026.

### **Board Advocacy**

#### **A. Suggestions for Staff Holiday Party – Dec 7 or 14 at 5:00pm**

The date of the staff holiday party is December 7, 2025.

Stevi Stutzmann said in the past a couple of staff members helped her with the party. She asked John Howard if he would reach out

to staff and ask for volunteers. Stevi Stutzman also asked John Howard if the budget for the party can be increased to \$900 from \$750 to help cover rising consumer prices. John Howard said yes.

## **Trustee Comments**

Stevi Stutzmann thanked members of the Board for grace during a particularly stressful time in her family life.

## **Closed Session**

Kate Smith moved to enter closed session pursuant to Illinois Statue ILCS 120/2(c)(1) in order to discuss the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body. Mike Cunningham seconded. The motion passed and the board entered closed session at 7:30pm.

The board returned from closed session at 8:33pm.

## **Action Items from Closed Session**

Mike Cunningham moved to authorize a 3% bonus for Library Director John Howard. Stevi Stutzman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mike Cunningham moved to authorize a \$4,000 bonus for the staff, for John Howard to distribute as he deems best. Stevi Stutzman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Adjournment**

Mike Cunningham moved to adjourn the meeting. Stevi Stutzman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35pm.

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Respectfully Submitted by Tammy Caputo, Assistant Director